

Aleksander Stocki: Enigmatic Philatelist

In Bulletin 282/23; 285/8; 293/8 there were references to the perfin "WP" found on French stamps 1939-45. One of these articles (Bull 293) was from Roy Reader. He and George Kay have published a book which includes the known facts about these perfins. I am including here all the information on the advertising leaflet as it could be of interest to collectors of other philatelic material.

Aleksander Stocki - army officer, philatelist and stamp dealer - went through his early life unfailingly leaving controversy in his wake, right from his days in Warsaw as officer and stamp dealer until his time in the Polish Army in exile first in France from January 1940 and then in Scotland from June 1940 until the end of World War II and beyond.

This book presents an impartial survey of Stocki's life and activities and, in so doing, explores the controversies that arose around him. Was he, for example, involved in some sort of skulduggery with the Warsaw-Tokyo Flight labels in 1926? Did this result in his being forced to leave the army? In France, was he involved in the perforating of French postage stamps with the letters 'WP' supposedly for use on mail sent by the Polish War Office in Paris? And were these stamps ever genuinely used on such mail? Moreover, how was it that he could turn up in Scotland with a lot of these stamps in his possession for sale? Also in Scotland, was genuine use ever made of the very many labels and small number of date-stamps produced by him supposedly for use by the Polish and other Allied Field Post Offices? Was he in reality the H.M.Smith whose name appeared as author on the cover of a 1946 catalogue of wartime Polish postal material? And why did his sales drive in Poland in 1947-48 bring down the wrath of the Polish philatelic press upon him? Finally, what eventually became of him when he seemed to disappear, with at least one person believing that he had gone to Palestine and another that he had set up a huge wholesaler's business in the Bahamas, Malta or some other Commonwealth country?

These, then, are some of the questions that this book examines in its survey of Stocki's life and activities. In some cases it is clear whether the controversy around him was justified or not; in other cases, the reader will have to make his own mind up from the evidence. The book will

certainly help the collector to identify philatelic material produced partly or entirely by Stocki. It will also help the collector to decide for himself whether this material is worthy of his album or just of the dustbin. The book's sixty-four pages include numerous illustrations, a catalogue of Stocki's labels produced in Scotland and key documents difficult or impossible to find in the United Kingdom.

The book **Aleksander Stocki: Enigmatic Philatelist** can be obtained from R.E.Reader, 3 Stanhope Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA15 7HA (UK). The cost per book is £9.50 plus postage & packaging (£1.50 within the United Kingdom, £2.50 to Europe, £4.00 to other destinations abroad). The sum of £10 must be added to cheques from abroad to cover bank charges. Cheques should be made payable to R.E. Reader. Orders will normally be sent out within ten days of receipt.

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